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THE
HILL TRIBES OF INDIA.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE
Church Missionary Society's Work

AMONG THE
MÁLÉR, SÁNTÁLS, GÔNDS, KOIS, BHEELS,
HILL ARRIANS, AND OTHER TRIBES.

BY THE
REV. C. D. SNELL, M.A.

[*Second Edition, Revised.*]

LONDON :
CHURCH MISSIONARY HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C
1899.

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THE HILL TRIBES OF INDIA.

ONE of the chief characteristics of the history of India, even from remote times, has been the forcible dispossession of one race by another. At some period in the far-distant past two great migratory hordes came from the plains of Asiatic Scythia—the Dravidians, or “Southerns,” who probably entered the country by the same north-west route along which the Hindu and Mahommedan followed them, and the Kolarians, who came by a north-east route, until they met and crossed their elder Dravidian kinsmen. These races were in possession of the land when, somewhere about the year 1000 B.C., another great invasion of India took place. There poured over the mountain barrier on the north-west a tall, slight, handsome, olive-coloured people from Central Asia, who called themselves Arya (noble), but when they crossed the great river Indus, became known as Hindus. In the south this race was beaten back by the Turanian peoples, the original inhabitants of South Asia; but in the centre of India it drove the aborigines into the hills, where they still subsist as distinct tribes. In striking contrast to the Hindus, the hill-men are small and swarthy; they love to dwell in thickets and mountain fastnesses; and thus, living apart, preserve their own peculiar institutions, which are neither altered by time nor modified to any great extent by civilization.

We find, then, as we should expect, that there is a great and material difference in religious and social customs between the Hill Tribes and the Hindus. The points of distinction have been conveniently summarized as follows:—

The Dravidians differ from the Hindus in that—

1. They have no distinctions of caste.
2. They permit widows to marry.
3. They do not venerate the cow, and they have no prejudices about eating the flesh of any animal.
4. They drink to excess.
5. They have no scruples about eating food prepared by any one.
6. They consecrate every ceremony by offering up a living sacrifice and spilling blood.

7. They only respect their self-created priests, according to their mode of life, and their skill in magic, in sorcery, and in divining future events; whereas the Hindus have a hereditary priesthood composed of the venerated "Brahmans."
8. They bury their dead, while the Hindus burn theirs.
9. They are ruled after the patriarchal manner: a contrast to municipal institutions.
10. They are very illiterate.

Consequent upon these religious and social distinctions between the two races, there is a difference in their preparedness to receive Christianity. It is true that the work among the hill tribes has been difficult in the past because of their natural timidity; but on the other hand they are comparatively open to the influence of Christian teaching, for there is but little for them to unlearn, and there is no bondage of caste. Concerning the former of these points, Dr. Fallon, a Government Inspector of Schools in India, wrote in 1864 of one of these tribes: "The Sántál mind is as a blank sheet, on which we can make what impression we please"; and he added a curious illustration of this: "The untaught Sántáls meekly learned of the European artificers who built the Soane bridge, as the prejudiced Hindu mechanic, vain of his inferior art, would not learn; and the Sántál proved the best workman, and finally superseded the Hindu blacksmiths, who would not learn to weld and rivet after the European method." The readiness of the Hill Tribes, as compared with the Moham-medans and Hindus, to receive the truth has been well described by the Rev. E. Droese. He said (1851): "If the missionary dwells on the love of God as seen in the Atonement of Christ, the Moslem will listen with an expression of contempt, and his features will seem to say, 'Nonsense! blasphemy!'—the Hindu, with a sceptical smile, as if to say, 'Who will believe that? There is no such love to be found with either man or God!'—but the hill-man, with evident awe, as if he were about to exclaim, 'What do I hear? O God, is it thus that Thou lovest man?'"

What has been said refers to the Hill Tribes, considered generally. There are, however, many variations in their religious tenets and social habits; for, being scattered about the country, one tribe has little, if any, communication with another, and the work among them differs widely. The C.M.S. missionaries labour among the Málér and Sántáls in North India, the Gónds in the Central Provinces, the Bheels in Rajputána, the Koís and Arrians in the Telugu

and Travancore Missions respectively, the Jaunsaris and Garhwalis in the North-West Provinces, and the Todas, Kurumburs, and other tribes on the Nilgiri Hills. There are some groups of Hill Tribes, the Khonds, the Kóls, and others, which are being evangelized by the S.P.G., Gossner's German Missionary Society, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, and other bodies; but we shall only speak of those aborigines among whom the C.M.S. is working.

I.—THE MÁLÉR AND SANTÁL MISSIONS.

A glance at the map either of India or Bengal will show that the Ganges, in its south-easterly course, is, as it were, pushed eastward by the Rájmahál Hills, until, having turned them, it flows southward to the Bay of Bengal. These hills, which do not exceed 2,000 feet in height, and are not unlike Dartmoor, are the home of the Dravidian tribe whose distinctive name is Málér (men), but which is commonly spoken of by outsiders as Páhárí (mountaineer). When Bengal became British territory this tribe was for some years a terror to the inhabitants of the plains, and a thorn in the side of the ruling power. The carriers of the mails between Calcutta and Benares were waylaid and murdered, the boats on the Ganges were robbed, and general insecurity prevailed in that part of the country. In consequence of these and similar outrages the Government resolved to punish the marauders; but little could be done by the heavily-armed troops against the wild and active hill-men, who were so thoroughly at home in the jungle, and it became necessary to adopt other measures. At this juncture a Mr. Cleveland, a young civilian residing at Bhágálpur, undertook to overcome the hostility of the disaffected tribes. He boldly went, unaccompanied by any force, and lived among them; and by dint of patience, tact, and judicious presents, succeeded in winning the Málér to peaceful loyalty. He died at his post in 1784. In 1832 the Rájmahál hills, with their valleys and adjacent plains to the extent of 1,366 square miles, were enclosed within a boundary called the *Daman-i-Koh* (the Persian word for boundary of the hills). This boundary line, 295 miles in length, is indicated by loose stones or earth, forming a low bank, with masonry pillars erected as permanent marks. All the land within the *Daman* was given by the Government to the Málér to be held by them as long as they behaved themselves in an orderly manner. At first, however, the arrangement thus made was scarcely satisfactory, for the Málér, who still retained

some of their marauding instincts, would not descend from their hill-tops and occupy the valleys; and the Hindus were unwilling to take possession of the lowlands, because they feared that their cattle would be carried off by their turbulent neighbours. The difficulty was overcome by an immigration of some of the *Sántáls*, a Kolarian tribe, whose territory to the south was "too strait" for them; and now half a million of *Sántáls* inhabit these valleys. In consequence of their occupying the same tract of country, these two tribes necessarily have business intercourse; but they nevertheless maintain their distinct characteristics—the *Málér* being the Highlander, the *Sántál* the Lowlander. Their religions, their customs, and their languages all differ, and their villages are wide apart; so that, although one missionary is often labouring among both the *Málér* and the *Sántáls*, the work among them is distinct, and will best be considered separately.

(a) THE *MÁLÉR* MISSION.

The religion of this tribe (supposed by some to be Dravidian) is of the most primitive kind, consisting simply of fetishism (a form of devil worship), without the elaborate idolatry of the Hindus, and without caste. The people acknowledge an invisible spirit, who made heaven and earth, and is worshipped through various images, stones, trees, &c. Their gods are not regarded as having any love for their devotees, who venerate them solely from motives of fear; and though the *Málér* speak of kindness and industry as being good, and of murder and injustice as being bad, yet their actions are not in accordance with these principles. The women are allowed no share in religious rites or feasts; but at the great annual festival in January, they, and even the children, are given a portion of the rice-beer made for the occasion, and all become intoxicated together. The *Málér* believe to a certain extent in the transmigration of souls, teaching that good men who have led upright lives will be born again as human beings, while the spirits of the wicked will be condemned to inhabit plants and trees. As a race, they were once said to be "savage and uncultivated, immersed in drunkenness and almost every other vice," but the influence of civilization and law have brought about some improvement. They are peculiarly accessible to outside influences, whether Hindu or Christian, and in their forms of worship often imitate the religious ceremonies and notions of those who are their neighbours.

There is, however, one great difficulty in the way of evangelizing this people, which does not exist in the case of the Sántáls. Their language is as yet so little known to outsiders that they are not within the reach of most of the Mission agents. There are comparatively few Sántál agents who are acquainted thoroughly with the "Malto" or hill language, and in many cases the Málér agents have been too recently won from Heathenism to be altogether satisfactory and reliable as teachers. The European missionaries have often been obliged to preach to the Málér through the medium of Hindi, which is not well understood by the latter; and as yet but little of the Bible has been translated. This lack, however, is being supplied, and every effort is being made to give the people the Word of God in their own tongue.

The C.M.S. Mission to this hill-tribe was commenced in the year 1850, when Bhágálpur, a town on the Ganges north of the Rájmahál hills, was occupied. Over 500 souls were added to the Church of Christ during the first ten years. The Rev. E. Droese, who laboured there more than thirty-five years, carried on evangelistic and educational work both for them and for the Hindu people of the district, which had some interesting fruits. He also did important literary work in Malto, the language spoken by the Málér. Now, however, these people are reached chiefly from the stations of the Sántál mission—especially from Bhágáyá, Hiránpur, Táljhári, and Goddá.

It will easily be understood that work among the Málér presents peculiar difficulties. They are thoroughly illiterate and very unreliable; in some parts their timidity is great; the ignorance, particularly of the women, is simply amazing; while, to make matters worse, there is as yet among these wild people but slight appreciation of the value of learning. Hitherto the Government has not done much to promote education among them; but its neglect is not an unmixed evil, for it is possible under existing circumstances to carry on the Mission Schools unopposed, and there is a free field for religious education, without the competition of a merely secular Government education.

The ignorance of these hill-men involves other disadvantages, besides the difficulty of conveying instruction to those who are so slow to learn. In most Missions some of the converts become catechists, and preach the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen; but among the Málér the missionaries find it almost impossible to procure suitable native agents. One reason for this has already been alluded to; another is the

ignorance even of the Christians. More workers, therefore, are urgently needed. According to the census of 1881, there are 94,000 of these people, inhabiting 250 square miles of hill and jungle. The congregations of Christians are numerous and scattered; and yet, for this and the Santál Mission combined, there are only six European missionaries and six ordained native workers. The Málér who have embraced Christianity need constant care and supervision, for they are surrounded by Heathenism, and by a degraded condition of social life; and the labourers now in the field are therefore compelled, however unwillingly, to make their choice, and to leave undone either the important work of building up the converts, or else the even more important work of evangelizing the Heathen.

Of late years the exigencies of the various Missions have necessitated constant changes of the workers amongst the Málér, and it has been said, with considerable measure of truth, that "the work, as hitherto carried on, lacks all that would mark it as a serious striving to win these people." However, in spite of all difficulties, the work has made some progress, as is shown by the following extracts from the Annual Letters of our brethren.

The Rev. J. Tunbridge, then working at Hiranpur, thus described the work at Chatra at the close of 1887:—

"This is a new centre opened during the year. Seventeen converts put on Christ by baptism about a year ago—eleven of them being adults. Now there are eight more candidates. Chatra is on the top of a high hill, and is the first opening among the Pahári in the Hiranpur district. The reader here is a remarkable and a good man. He was formerly a conjurer and medicine-man, and as such a great opponent of the Gospel; but the Holy Spirit convinced him of the truth, and no man of his tribe has been more instrumental in bringing souls to Christ than he. His knowledge of jungle medicine, and his earnest, upright life, tell with these simple hill-people."

In another letter Mr. Tunbridge says that this man frequently uses the expression, "Blessing is descending out of heaven on the hills." So again we are told of Khamidoni, near Hiranpur:—

"One family of three adults and four children has come out, and just lately ten more have come under instruction at Jirli, about two miles further off; seven of these are adults. The people at Khamidoni have endured a great deal of persecution from the headman there—a relative too; once the man was brutally beaten by him."

More recent reports have not been very satisfactory. One missionary speaks of the slackness of the Málér in attending the daily prayers and the Sunday services; of their quarrellings,

and utter want of love for one another; and of the very noticeable falling off in their contributions.

The following cases also remind us of the constant need of prayer for the Native Christians, that they may stand fast, and for the missionaries, that they may have grace to be faithful, loving, and wise:—

“Sadrak Hadia, a Málér Christian, took to drink and dancing; immorality followed. Not content with this, he endeavoured to draw away other Christians, and the results were sad indeed. A curse seemed to rest on the village. One Christian went mad and died. Afterwards several others died, and the small congregation was greatly reduced. Then Sadrak took to evil courses, and his end was a sad one. Going out into his field one day he came across a wounded leopard; the animal seized him by the leg, inflicting severe wounds. His wife, hearing his cries, came out with her son and stoned the creature, who then attacked her. In the meantime the wounded man managed to crawl away, and thus was rescued; but after five days of agony he died from blood-poisoning and in mental terror.”

The following is an interesting account given by the Rev. F. T. Cole of some Málér converts. Writing at the beginning of 1890 he said:—

“The Christians of Taljhári have had their own missionary district of Poraspani, and have supported the agent there for the past four years. This year three adults have been baptized as the first-fruits of this missionary society. Surja and his family had been under instruction for some time past. He himself is the headman of the village, and his elder brother the Government head of about twenty villages. While I was examining them previous to baptism, the brothers came and seated themselves close to me, and one of them said to me in a peremptory manner, ‘What business have you to come here? What do you want?’ It was such a strange thing to hear a timid Málér speak in this way, that I thought the man must be drunk; but no, he had been put up to it, in hopes that if they frightened me the brother would be influenced to draw back from taking the fatal step. A shade passed over Surja’s face, and for a moment I feared that he was giving way; but I misjudged him. I asked him before them all, ‘Do you wish to become a Christian?’ He said, ‘Yes: I have been longing for it for some time, but you have hindered me hitherto.’ (He had been under instruction for more than a year, and every Sunday they had had a service, and had actually begun to have an offertory.) Then, in the presence of them all, I called for some water and baptized the father, mother, and youngest son. Two elder sons had not been sufficiently instructed, so I thought they had better wait a little longer. Their wives are also very well inclined. After the service was over, Surja said to me, ‘Now I want to clear out all the *deotas* (demons and household gods) from my house and village.’ The two elder sons (who had not been baptized)

at their father's bidding then brought a ladder, and took down from the roof, inside the house, two huge bundles of bark, each as large as a man, in the centre of which were some carved sticks. These had been kept in the house more than twelve years, and were covered with soot and cobwebs. They are supposed to be the deities who bring riches and health. After this were produced some mysterious-looking baskets and pots, one of which contained something wrapped up in a rag. The youngest son opened this with great glee, and showed me a small quartz stone covered with vermillion. This was supposed to be the charm of the house. Surja then brought fire and set light to all these abominations in the presence of his brothers and the villagers. The elder brother looked as if he could kill Surja. He was mad with rage."

We will conclude with a description of some baptisms among this people :—

"There are two congregations of Málér in this district. At Jhapsi, one of them, the people have built a new chapel in their own style during the past year. We had some interesting baptisms from these two congregations last November (1886). As there were candidates from both, we met at a place situated midway between the two villages, close by a spring, about 20 feet square, which is completely shut in by large trees, whilst on all sides are lovely clumps of tall bamboos. It is in a picturesque glen on the top of the hills, and formed an appropriate spot for the ceremony. The people were gaily attired (the Málér are naturally very fond of colours), and they had also decked the place with wild flowers for the occasion. The catechumens were placed on one side of the rivulet which issued from the spring, and were examined publicly. After that, the Baptismal Service was read, and one by one they entered the water, and then passed out to the other side where the Christians were standing. We trust it was no mere sign, but that each was washed in the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and that they have crossed over, once and for all, from the kingdom and power of Satan into the fellowship of saints."

(b) THE SÁNTÁL MISSION.*

The religion of the Sántáls is based on a fear of spirits or demons, but idolatry among them is not elaborated into a system, although they observe many superstitious practices. One of the demons is called Márańg-Buru, or Great Mountain; inferior to this are the household gods and the ancestors of each individual. All kinds of sacrifices are offered to Márańg-Buru; but there is always present either blood, or some red flower or fruit, which serves to represent it. When sickness and death come into a family, the people believe that demons are the cause, and that they must be propitiated by sacrifices

* For more detailed information concerning work amongst the Sántáls, see the pamphlet, *The Sántál Mission*, published by the C.M.S., price 3d.

lest there should be more victims. Although the Sántáls naturally delight to cut down jungle, yet they have great respect for certain trees. In connexion with each village there is a small grove reserved from the old forest, and at the feet of several of these trees small stones are fixed in the ground, one or two at the foot of each tree: each stone is marked with red lead, and represents a demon. The Sántáls believe that the demons afflict them when they wish them to sacrifice, and the people hope that, the demons being appeased by sacrifices, they will withdraw their afflicting presence.

Their ideas of a future life are exceedingly vague; but that they do believe in some sort of existence beyond the grave is clearly shown by the fact that dead children are always included when the number of a family is given. According to one of their traditions, the being called Márang-Buru taught the first man and woman to make and to drink the intoxicating rice-beer. Previously they had been in a state of child-like simplicity; but whilst they were drunk they lost that virtue. Nevertheless, the Sántáls do not regard drunkenness itself as sin, but appeal to their tradition to back up their intemperate habits. Indeed, it may be said that they have no real conception of what sin is.

In bygone days intemperance was the great national vice of the people. Not only was rice-beer used, but a number of Mohammedans, sellers of a very strong spirit, established themselves in many places among the Sántáls, who were soon in a fair way to be ruined by this imported drink. Consequently, in 1876, the Government of Bengal endeavoured to diminish intemperance within the Daman district by expelling nearly all the spirit-vendors, and by issuing stringent orders with regard to the habits of the head-men of the villages. By this action much good was done since drunkenness was stigmatized as a vice, and the impression was created in the minds of the people that it was an offence; but it must be confessed that intemperance is still sadly prevalent owing to the home brewing of rice-beer by the Sántáls, and the sale of spirit at certain centres by licensed Hindu or Mohammedan vendors. The annual reports of the missionaries continue to show that intemperance is one of the great hindrances to the acceptance of the Gospel. Not infrequently some who professed to have accepted Christ, have parted with Him rather than renounce the injurious drink, and though the Christians who thus give way to temptation, in God's mercy have frequently been restored, yet incalculable harm has been done to the cause of Christianity by their lapse. For while the

heathen do not think much of a Christian falling into *sin*, the return of a nominal Christian to *Heathenism* is regarded as indicating that Christianity has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. The renegade may have committed an immoral act, and failing to bear the discipline to which he has in consequence been subjected, may have left the Church. The Heathen in such a case would not make any account of the character of the man, but would consider the fact that he had returned to *them* a condemnation of Christianity.

The first efforts to evangelize the Sántáls were made by the Rev. E. Droese, nearly fifty years ago. In the course of his work amongst the Pahári, he had met with some of the Sántáls, and endeavoured to establish a few schools amongst them; but it was not until 1860 that the C.M.S. Sántál Mission was commenced by the Rev. E. L. Puxley, who had been a cavalry officer. In 1863 he established the station at Taljhári, which has ever since been the headquarters of the mission; and he was the first to begin the Sántáli New Testament and Prayer-Book.

He was succeeded in 1864 by the Rev. W. T. Storrs, who in that year baptized the first converts, young men from the school at Taljhári, who had previously been instructed at Bhagalpur, and Hiránpur, and who speedily became witnesses for Christ. During the following six or seven years some hundreds of adults and children were admitted into the visible Church of Christ, the work having been much helped by the medical skill of both Mr. Puxley and Mr. Storrs. The latter built the church at Taljhári, which is a conspicuous object in the district; he also gave much time to preparing a number of young men to act as catechists, and to translational work. In 1868 the Rev. H. W. Shackell, a Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, joined the Sántál Mission, but the death of his wife, and incipient ophthalmia, compelled him to retire in 1871, the year in which Mr. Storrs finally returned to England. The work then devolved upon the Revs. J. Hørnle and J. Brown, who steadily carried on the evangelization of the people.

Of recent years the progress has not been so rapid, but still there is much to encourage. Six of the converts are in Holy Orders, and others are regarded as spiritually fitted for the work, but it is not thought to be desirable to ordain more men than the Native Church can support. When once Native teachers are paid by funds sent from England, it is most difficult to get them to look to their countrymen for the payment necessary, and also most difficult to convince the Native

Christians that they ought to support their own ministry. Consequently, the matter of self-support has been brought prominently forward from the first, and every Sunday offerings have been taken, and the people often told for what they were being asked to give. But it was not until 1890, when the Native Church Council was formed, that efforts in this direction were systematized. This Council consists of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, all but the Chairman being Natives, the Native Clergy and Lay Agents, and delegates from the various congregations. In each Pastorate connected with the Council there is a Committee, the members of which must be communicants, and are elected by the congregations. They meet every month, and consider the work done in the Pastorate, its prospects, and any case of interest in connexion with it; every individual Christian comes under review: all cases of trial and difficulty, of fault or sin, are discussed, and as far as possible dealt with; and the finances of the Native Church receive attention.

With respect to the present position of the work, the testimony of the different missionaries assures us that, speaking generally, the people are convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and there is great cause for good hopes as to the future. One wrote a few years ago:—

“At one village the old grey-headed chief spoke out his conviction that the Christian religion was the one true religion, and that the prophecy of Sidu and Kanhu, whom they regard as having been martyrs in a righteous cause during the rebellion of 1854-55, is being fulfilled, viz., that there would be one religion and one language for the people in the future, meaning the Christian religion, and, I suppose, the English language.”

Another speaks of the condition of affairs as follows:—

“Though saddened by many individual cases, yet on the whole we are cheered by the main body of Christians, whose lives, if not brilliant, are steady. Considering the evil surroundings, it makes me wonder more and more to see such steadfastness. Some of the pastorate reports read at our last Native Church Council meeting were most cheering. Steady progress was reported from most of the districts. The agents, whilst attending to the pastoral wants of their flocks, spend the greater part of their time in preaching to the Heathen. On all sides the testimony is that the Sántáls are convinced in their minds that Christianity is the true religion. Their own beliefs seem to have been undermined. Nevertheless, they are wedded to their heathen rites, which, with drink and dancing, with their accompanying sins, are the hindrances to the reception of the Gospel.”

Such testimonies might easily be multiplied. Results are described as being very encouraging, and the fields as full of

promise; the schools are doing a most valuable evangelistic work, there being several baptisms every year of boys who belong to the Taljhári boarding-school; the Christians are stated to be, in most places, the rising men; while, although there are some sad exceptions, the converts are spoken of as being imbued with the missionary spirit, regular in their attendance at public worship, and liberal in their gifts. It was reported in 1895 that in the previous year the rice given at the harvest festivals amounted to between four and five tons, the largest amount ever given. A collection was also made during the year for the Bible Society, and in acknowledgment of the money the Calcutta Secretary wrote: "The Sántáls have the honour of sending us the largest sum that has ever been sent at one time by Native Churches." It is worthy of note that over two-fifths of the cost of the pastorate work is raised by the Native Christians, and that, in addition, six evangelists are supported by the Native Missionary Association. At the Bárhárwa boarding-school each class of girls has its own missionary-box, made by themselves of clay, with a tin lid and a slit in it. In many houses, too, a pot for rice is put by the stove, and every time the people cook they put into it a handful of rice for Christ. The contents of these boxes are collected in the church on the third Sunday in the month.

In 1896-7 no less than 3,500 Sántál Christians were attached to the six C.M.S. stations—*Táljhári*, *Sántálpur*, *Bárhárwa*, *Hiránpur*, *Bhágáyá*, and *Goddá*. These, with their out-stations, are worked by six missionaries and six native pastors. There are more than 1,100 native communicants, and 49 schools with 1,300 scholars. During the year there were 218 baptisms, 73 being of adults.

Before proceeding to speak of individual conversions, it will be well, perhaps, to mention some of the difficulties which confront the workers in this part of the mission-field, since we need specially to remember them in our prayers.

Besides the love of the Sántáls for strong drink, to which reference has already been made, there are many other drawbacks, more or less common in most mission-fields, which impede the progress of the Gospel in Sántália. The unwillingness of the people to give up their sins—a universal stumbling-block—is mentioned more than once. One of their fellow-countrymen once said of them, "They would all become Christians were it not for the holy life necessary. They are on the brink, but are restrained, because they do not wish to forsake evil."

Another obstacle, only too common, consists in the temptations to the young converts from the Heathenism which they have just left, and by which they are surrounded. Several have fallen away from this cause, and brought dishonour upon the name of religion. Many other points might be mentioned: the annual repairing of buildings, and the like, which is so great a tax upon the time of the missionary, who longs to devote himself entirely to preaching the Gospel; the isolation of some of the labourers, who are cut off from Christian Society, only one other European being within forty miles; the troubles which converts experience at the hands of their relations and the village authorities; the Hinduizing influences which prevent the spread of Christianity; and last, but not least, the fewness of the workers. At the time of Mr. Wigram's visit to India (1886-7) Sántálá was spoken of as a "strong mission"; but soon afterwards sickness and other causes so reduced the staff that for a while the work seemed to be almost in a state of collapse. Even now, although some of the missionaries have been enabled to return to their posts, and others have been transferred to fill up the gaps, the Mission joins in the universal prayer—the Macedonian cry which rises from all parts of the world—the "Come over and help us," which is addressed to every disciple of the Lord Jesus. Especially pressing is the need of a Medical Mission.

Turning now to the brighter side, it is possible to give many instances, both of inquirers about Christianity from among the Sántáls, and also of definite conversions and changed lives. The Rev. J. Blaich wrote in 1893:—

"Again, last November I was privileged to witness a sight which I shall never forget. At Barhait, in the centre of our district, there were over twenty catechumens (five families in all). I visited them several times; but one Sunday night, after having held service at Sarjomghutu, five miles away, I asked them again to assemble, when the courtyard was crowded with Sántáls, Heathen and Christians. There, in the dark but clear, starry night, we sang and prayed and preached till very late. Not a voice of dissent, no jarring and squabbling; all were hushed and solemnized. At the end I asked those whose names had been noted down as candidates whether they were still minded to be baptized, when all declared before the assembled Heathen that they were still of the same mind, and wanted to be baptized as soon as possible. One bright young woman then got up and asked me why her and her husband's names had been left out. She also had learned the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed, although the Munshi had not put down her name. The latter said he thought they ought to wait, as the husband was rather slow in learning. We then came to a compromise. I promised to baptize them with the others, provided her husband had learned sufficiently by the time of baptism."

So again the Rev. J. Blaich said in 1896 :—

"I must mention just one case from those that were latterly baptized. Parbat is the nephew of a Pergannite, a Sántál Government official in charge of thirty to forty villages. He had not been long in the school before he expressed a wish to become a Christian. As is my custom, I kept him under instruction for more than six months, and at last sent him home to announce the fact of his conversion to his parents and his uncle. They, of course, opposed him with might and main, and endeavoured by every means to keep him at home away from me. Yet he had the courage to forsake father, and mother, and relations, and return to school. Letter after letter came asking him not to be baptized; yea, the very day of his baptism his poor old grandmother came a long distance groaning and crying, asking him to return with her, and telling him that if he were baptized they would have to renounce him, and would regard him as dead. The Lord strengthened him to withstand all the pleadings and the threatenings. He and the twelve other boys who were baptized together were so full of joy, that in the evening, after church, several Heathen youths gave in their names as catechumens, saying they were induced to do so by witnessing the great joy and happiness of those who were baptized."

That the faith of many of the Sántál Christians is one that will stand the supreme test of the hour of death has been shown in some interesting cases. The Rev. J. Brown wrote some years ago :—

"Of one of the youths of the Taljhári school, who had latterly joined the Normal Class, I am told that when daily sinking under rapid consumption at his home in the interior, 'the Bible was his constant companion and delight.'

"During last hot season a little girl about ten years old fell a victim, after long suffering, to chronic derangement of the spleen. On the day previous to her departure the dear child knew the time was near, and she said to her sorrowing father, 'Dear father, do not weep for me; Jesus has called me; I am going to be with Jesus.' We believe that little Ratnî Munî (jewel saint) was indeed 'a saint of the Lord,' and that she is one of those of whom the Lord has said, 'They shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels.'

"At the close of the hot season passed away Lakhia, the wife of Paulus. She suffered from fever and deranged spleen from 1880, and became a miserably emaciated object. During my visits to Taljhári in the past year I frequently attended her, and administered the Lord's Supper with the Word and prayer. I think I never saw in England a person on a deathbed with more confiding faith in God, with no sign of alarm at approaching death, with full consciousness and devoutly clasped hands and silently moving lips, speaking to her Lord in prayer. Her husband told me that her departure was, as her waiting, happiness and peace."

II.—THE GÔND MISSION.

The Central Provinces of India are divided for administrative purposes into seventeen districts. That of Mandla—the headquarters of the C.M.S. Mission to the Gônds—lies furthest away to the north-east, among the table-lands and up-land valleys of the Satpura Hills, and drained by the mighty Nerbada, on which, 1,500 feet above sea-level, at a distance of 60 miles from Jabalpur, Mandla itself is situated. The town is but small, containing a population of less than 5,000, but its position is a commanding one, and it is a convenient centre for work among the Gônds, of whom there are some 200,000 in the district.

The name Gônd or Gund—interchangeable with Khond or Khund, which denotes the aborigines of Orissa, who used to sacrifice human victims known as Merias (a note concerning which is appended)—is from the Telugu word for a mountain, and may be taken to mean “hill-men.” The Dravidian people who bear this name are said to regard nine sins as specially heinous, viz.:—

1. Refusing hospitality.
2. Breaking a promise.
3. Speaking falsely.
4. Breaking a pledge of friendship.
5. Breaking any old custom.
6. Incest.
7. Debt.
8. Cowardice in battle.
9. Divulging a public secret.

Though wild, uncivilized, and ignorant, the Gônds are among themselves honest, faithful, and trustworthy, besides being, like many of the aboriginal tribes, remarkably truthful. Their wives are looked upon as so much property, for they are expected not only to do all the household work, but also to help in the agricultural labour. A man of position will have four or five wives; but a poor man contents himself with one. Though their villages very often belong to non-resident Hindus, the Gônds invariably recognize some one of their number as headman, who is called the *Bhoi*; and in all dealings with them he is the one whom it is important to influence. The only other local magnate is the *Kotwal*, a sort of village watchman appointed by Government, who is bound to carry a weekly report of births, deaths, &c., to the nearest police-station. These people have a language of their own, called Gôndi,

which is generally, but not universally, spoken. Hindi, however, is understood by all.

The Gônds are said to have in all some fifteen gods, who are supposed to have different functions. Thus one, Mâka, is the god of small-pox; another, Sale, presides over cattle-pens; another, Kattarpar, is the god of ravines; another, the god of war; and a fifth, the god who is believed to bless crops of grain. The majority of the deities are malevolent, and some of the practices which until recently were carried on in their honour were cruel, and almost fiendish. For instance, in the worship of Kali, a Hindu goddess, the main features of whose character are derived from aboriginal sources, and who is venerated by many of the Gônds in the province of Nagpur, human sacrifices used to be offered. The victim was taken after sunset to the temple dedicated to Kali, and shut up within its dismal walls. In the morning, when the door was opened, he was found dead—much to the glory of the great goddess, who had shown her power by coming during the night and sucking his blood. No doubt there used to be some of her servants hidden in the fane, whose business it was to prepare for her the horrid banquet. Besides worshipping these fifteen gods, the Gônds are accustomed to propitiate, for at least one year, the spirits of their departed friends; while, if the deceased has been of importance in any way, he is treated as a god for years, and a small shrine of earth is erected to his memory, at which sacrifices are annually offered. One of the deities of this people is called the "great god"; but this term is only used to distinguish him from the other lesser deities, for he and they are all regarded as media of communication between the invisible Creator of the world and man. In their own houses the Gônds have no idols; but at the scenes of their religious rites in the jungle various objects are set up—such as stones, pieces of wood, &c., which serve to represent their gods. As a race they are extremely superstitious: they firmly believe in ghosts, and say that the ghost of a man killed by a tiger or panther rides on the head of the beast, and incites it to further attacks on men. They stick thorns into the hands and feet of women who die in childbirth, and even, in some cases, break the arms and legs, and bury the body deep; for they suppose that the ghosts of such women have a special spite against men and little children.

Such religion as the Gônds have is a religion of superstition and fear. They have no love for their gods, and do not believe that their gods have any love for them; but they are afraid that their deities, if they do not worship them, will bring all sorts of

evil upon them; evil spirits will possess them; sickness, blight, and death will come upon them. It is fear of their gods (for theirs is really devil-worship), not love for them, which keeps the Gônds from giving them up. Consequently we find that in some places the people try to make a compromise—they pray daily to Jesus Christ, and yet sacrifice in times of sickness to demons as well. Thus, too, there is a village the inhabitants of which said they would worship Jesus Christ for a year and a half to try Him, but that if their old gods brought evil on them in consequence, then they would return to them, and leave Jesus Christ.

These points are well illustrated by the following reports from the field:—

“One day, riding along, I saw a curious-looking sort of a toy-cart on the ground. I asked the *sais* to bring it to me. He seemed very much afraid of it; and I observed as he drew near to it that he saluted it, folded his hands together, and mumbled something or other. I afterwards found out what it was. When a village is attacked by sickness, the inhabitants sweep the whole village out and then make a small cart, and politely request the demon causing the sickness to get on to it; then they drive him away into the jungle, hoping he will get lost there or else find his way to another village. This is supposed to be a patent remedy for all diseases.

“The same day we camped at a village where there was a Gônd priest and worshipping-house. No idols were to be seen, but little flags were flying on long poles in honour of various gods. The priest was kind enough to explain how he cured sick people. He takes his little drum and, sitting down by the sick man's side, begins to hum and drone away until the enchanted evil spirit becomes, as it were, mesmerized, and enters the priest's body. Then, of course, this latter would naturally fall ill unless the spirit were expelled; and this the priest accomplishes by dint of thrashing himself with a heavy and cruel chain which I saw.

“Both Gônds and Baigas are most thoroughly superstitious and thoroughly believe in witchcraft. We had an annular eclipse of the moon this year; and their version of the affair was that a demon had come to swallow the moon because he would not pay his debts. As soon as they were paid, the demon went off. The Gônds have only one temple in this district; but they frequently have tiny huts about four feet high, with, or more generally without, an image inside, but containing symbols of worship. Near these there are generally half a dozen poles stuck up. At one village the priest used to climb to the top of one of these poles daily and place grain there for the monkey-god.”

Again, there are many drawbacks to the work from the extreme ignorance of the hill-men. An effort was once made to commence a day-school at Patpara: “but,” Mr. Herbert wrote, “difficulties soon arose; the elder boys were too useful to their

fathers in the fields, and were called away, now for the rice and *kodo* harvest, now for the wheat—so the attendance has been very irregular. The people are very ignorant, and do not see much use in their children learning to read. The headman of the nearest village, whose son had learnt to read a little before, and used to attend most regularly, now sends the boy to the jungle with the buffaloes because his knowledge was insufficient to enable him to decipher a certain letter which came for his father. Another boy was beaten by his father because he could not read a book after a few lessons on the alphabet." The people, too, realizing their ignorance, are apt to take refuge in it as an excuse for not embracing Christianity, and frequently reply, when they have heard an account of sin, the sinner, and the Saviour—"Yes, it is all true—we know and feel it; but what can a poor Gônd do?" This is especially the case when the hill-men have come much into contact with the Hindus, who despise and oppress the poor inhabitants of the jungle. The inability of the Gônds to read renders them entirely dependent upon oral instruction, and their being unaccustomed to any serious thought causes them very quickly to forget what they learn. Add to these things the facts that their agricultural pursuits prevent their leaving their homes to come to the missionaries, and the impossibility, because of the fewness of the workers and the wide distribution of the scanty population, of placing a resident teacher in each village, and it will easily be understood how serious a hindrance this ignorance is to the spread of the Gospel.

It is now more than fifty years since the first effort was made to reach the Gônds. Sir Donald M'Leod, who was then stationed in the Central Provinces, recognizing the importance of preaching the Gospel to them, appealed to the Missionary Societies of England on their behalf; and when they replied that they could do nothing, made application to Pastor Gossner of Berlin, who responded by sending out five German artisans and husbandmen, with an apothecary, under an ordained missionary, the Rev. J. Loesch. This band commenced work in the depth of the jungles near Amarkantak; but it was not God's will that the sanguine expectations which had been formed should be realized. After a few months a dreadful visitation of cholera swept through the country, and carried off all but two of these devoted workers. The survivors, who at the time were too ill to bury the dead, at length reached Jabalpur; but there the mind of one gave way beneath the strain of the

sorrows and anxieties through which he had passed. From that date until 1879 nothing was done for the Gônds, excepting by an occasional tour of the Rev. E. Champion, who was working at Jabalpur; but then, in response to this missionary's frequent and urgent appeals, the C.M.S. Committee appointed the Rev. H. D. Williamson to labour specially among the hill-men in that part of the country. From 1879 to 1884 he and his wife were the only workers at Mandla, though Mr. Champion still gave such help as he could. At the end of the latter year the Rev. E. P. Herbert was sent out to join them; and in 1885 they were still further reinforced by the arrival of the Rev. H. P. Parker and a medical missionary, Dr. W. Johnson. Mr. Parker, however, was soon called to Africa to succeed Bishop Hannington, and Dr. Johnson has since retired; but in 1890 a band of associated evangelists, consisting of the Rev. H. J. Molony, and Messrs. J. W. Goodwin and E. R. Jackson, was sent out to work among the Gônds, and has since been reinforced.

The method of work chiefly adopted is itneration, though steps have also been taken to promote education. Between November and April specially, but often on into June, until the rains come to stop the marching, the missionaries, accompanied by their catechists, go from village to village preaching the Gospel of Christ crucified. In the earlier history of the Mission it was found very difficult to overcome the timidity of the hill-men, which was so great that, when they saw in the distance the missionary approaching their village, they frequently all fled into the jungle. The Rev. H. D. Williamson, who laboured long and faithfully among this people, tells of one village where his tent was pitched in which not a man could be seen all through the day, and when at nightfall one or two were found, they explained in trembling tones that they had heard he was coming to seize them all, and take them away across the "black water" to England. The census too is a trouble to the Gônds. In 1891 a report spread that all unmarried girls and widows would be seized by Government; so many marriages were hastily arranged, and even little children of four and five years old were pointed out to the missionary as duly provided with husbands. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that it was some time before the Gospel seemed to tell upon the Gônds; indeed, it was not until the commencement of 1885 that the first convert from this race was baptized. Mr. Williamson's account of this man's history is deeply interesting:—

"When on tour in 1883, I arrived about midday on a Saturday in

a village called Banguar, some sixty miles from Mandla, and, as my custom is, inquired for the *Bhoi's* house, to find a lodging for myself and catechist. When I arrived there I found a convenient little hut attached to his house, in which we established ourselves. The owner had just left that morning to go to a village some 25 miles away; but late in the afternoon he turned up. He had spent many years seeking salvation, and finding nothing to help him in the Gônd religion, he had sought advice from a wandering Hindu priest, who advised him to leave his house and become a fakir. Accordingly he went and took up his abode just outside his village, under a pipal-tree (the sacred fig-tree of the Hindus), where he lived and meditated for a whole year, being very highly revered in consequence as a devotee. However, this gave him no peace of mind, and he returned to his former work as headman of the village. The day that I arrived, it had been his intention to go away for three or four days; but when he got about ten miles from home, something—he could not tell what—compelled him to turn round and come back again. When he found that a Christian *padri* had arrived in his village, he was as much convinced as I that it was God Himself who had led him back, and he spent the whole of that day and the next with me questioning and discussing. At our morning and evening prayers and the Sunday services he sat and listened with the deepest attention: and as he could actually read (a most unusual accomplishment for a Gônd), I was able to leave a New Testament and some tracts with him, which he gladly received.”

In a letter written the following year Mr. Williamson spoke of this *Bhoi Baba* as desirous of being baptized, and said that he always carried about with him a New Testament, which he read most patiently, praying that more light might be given him. Thus he came by degrees to know the Saviour; and at length on 4th January, 1885, was admitted into the visible Church of Christ:—

“During the previous year he showed how thoroughly he was in earnest, and identified himself altogether with us by leaving his home for weeks at a time, and going about with us from village to village on our preaching tours, frequently adding his own testimony to ours, and boldly assailing the Heathenism of his countrymen. Long before he was actually baptized, his friends and relatives used to say of him, ‘Oh, he is already a Christian!’ and certainly in his behaviour he would have put to shame many of our so-called Christian countrymen.”

The influence of this *Bhoi*, who chose the baptismal name of Paulus, was very great, even after he became a Christian. He accompanied Mr. Williamson on his tours; and though his home was distant some sixty miles from Mandla, he used frequently to pay a visit of three or four days, and stay for the Sunday services, returning with a supply of Gospels and tracts, which he gave to any of his acquaintances who could

read. Mr. Herbert, writing in 1890, spoke of Paulus as having been a power for good at Marpha in keeping the scattered flock together, and added, "He continues his earnest efforts to reach outsiders, especially trying to bring *babas* (devotees) like himself to the feet of Isa-Masih (Jesus Christ). He is seldom long at home, but travels about on foot all over that part of the district. We would ask for special prayer on his behalf (with thanksgiving), as he has such wide influence for good, and is exerting it so successfully for the Master." Paulus died of cholera in 1896, steadfast in his faith in the Saviour, and adjuring those of his relatives who were still heathen not to perform any rites to propitiate his departed spirit.

We must now mention some of the converts and inquirers. After the baptism of the *Bhoi Baba*, the hill-men began to come forward by ones and twos to confess Christ. Of one of these Mr. Williamson wrote:—

"Leaving Marpha, I directed my steps to a village where, the *Bhoi Baba* informed me, there were two men, who, having heard the Gospel from his lips, were very desirous of becoming Christians. On our arrival, we found that the mind of one of the two men mentioned had changed with regard to Christianity, and that the other had scruples about his ability to give up certain former customs when he should become a Christian—which led us to dissuade him from coming forward too hastily until he had fully counted the cost. We had much prayer and conversation with him, and the next day left for another village, thinking that we should not for months to come be likely to see him again, for we were well on in the hot season. However, that same evening, nine or ten miles away as we were, he walked into our camp, and came to me with the brightest face to say that all his difficulties had melted away, and that he could not let us go without being baptized—would I baptize him? When I saw how evidently he had found peace in the Lord, I could not feel myself justified in delaying further, and the next day he was baptized. His name is Mithu. What had influenced him more than anything else, I found, was the death, four days before, of one of the villagers in full faith in Christ, a man whom I had never seen, who had been taught by the *Bhoi Baba*. On his death-bed he would not allow his friends to bring in the exorciser to perform the usual magic rites, but died with the words on his lips—"Jesus Christ is coming, and is taking me up."

In his next Annual Letter (December, 1887) Mr. Williamson was able to tell of steady progress in the mission:—

"Thank God, the two baptisms of the year before last, and four of last year, have grown this year to seventeen, two being children and the rest adults; and I am thankful to say that of the latter four were women.

"In my hot-weather visit to Marpha I had the joy of admitting

five more catechumens in one day into Christ's visible Church. Much excitement was caused by two of them being women. One of these met with much opposition from her mother, who happened to arrive that very day from her own home, some fifteen miles away. Until service-time I was doubtful which way things would go, but when I called to the font those who were to be baptized, the mother herself pushed the woman forward, and afterwards stated that she meant to become a disciple herself eventually."

Later reports are also encouraging. In 1892 Mr. Williamson wrote :—

"On Sunday, May 22nd, at Banguar, the *Bhoi Baba's* village, I had the pleasure of baptizing two inquirers. The service was held in my tent, with one of the sides thrown back, and we had a nice little congregation of ten or twelve Christians and as many Heathen. One of the men baptized was an intelligent man of about fifty, who had made himself a name as a sort of 'wise man,' to whom people resorted from all parts; his answers to the questions in the Baptismal Service were so evidently from the heart that he could not wait to be prompted with those in the Prayer-book, but invariably gave his assent in forcible words of his own."

And in 1894 the Rev. H. J. Molony recorded "the conversion and baptism of another Gônd headman":—

"He lives at a village, Salea, three miles from Marpha, and is the first of his village to be converted. He has been impressed by the truth of Christianity for years, having heard the Gospel preached by Mr. Williamson long ago, and thinking seriously about it then. He has, meanwhile, learnt to read a little: this, among Gônds, seems to be a sign of desire for higher things, and it prepares the way well for our instruction. This man has been most delightful to teach; he learnt for six months, was most decided, and seemed to have no ulterior motive, not giving the slightest hint for financial help, either to me or the catechist, when I knew he was in difficulty about rent and such things. On July 18th I went over to his village, and, after cutting off his top-knot of hair in the presence of his family, we went down to the running stream below the village, and there, with a few Christians who had come with me, and before a little group of heathen friends, we knelt down on the stones together, and then I baptized him. Just before the service another from that village publicly declared his wish to be a Christian, and two others came a few days later and said the same; they are still under instruction."

The Gônds suffered greatly during the terrible famine of 1896-7, and in the Mandla District, although relief was being given, the death-rate was, during two months, above 197 per thousand, and for several other months was as high as 140 and 130 per thousand per annum. Funds were subscribed through the C.M.S. for the help of the sufferers, and the missionaries did all in their power to provide food for the starving. In April, 1897, there were over 700 on relief, and ten

soup-kitchens were opened in different village centres ; in September, 1,800 people were helped daily. In this way the missionaries were brought in contact with a large number of men and women, as well as children and orphans, who were specially prepared by the kindness they had received to listen to the Gospel message. Concerning these, the Rev. H. J. Molony wrote :—

“We do not want famine Christians. But many have come to the instruction classes, and if, after the famine is over and they are thrown again on their own resources, they still persevere in their desire to learn, still wish to follow the only true God, and really show signs of repentance and faith, they will be accepted and baptized. At present the most sincere will only be made catechumens.”

Mention has been made of the Baigas : they are a people quite distinct from the Gônds, and still more uncivilized. They live by preference at the tops of the hills, and practise that abomination of Government Forest Officers, “*dahya* cutting.” This is carried on as follows :—A steep hill-side is chosen covered with trees and brushwood, and in the cold season these are cut down and allowed to dry until May, when they are fired, and the ground is thus covered with a thick coating of ashes. As soon as the first rain falls, the seed, a miserable millet called *Kutki*, is sown broadcast over the ashes, and in due time the crop springs up and is reaped. The damage done to valuable timber is, of course, irreparable ; for each year a new piece of hill-side is cleared, and every attempt is being made by Government to put a stop to it, and to induce the Baigas to settle in the plains. In many villages they now live side by side with the Gônds, who employ them as their priests, and call them in in the case of trouble some tigers, and every kind of misfortune.

In speaking of the prospects and needs of the Mission we must quote the words of the Rev. F. T. Cole, of the Sántál Mission, who is well qualified to judge of the progress of the Gospel and the attitude of the people, having been stationed for several months among the Gônds. He says :—

“The Gônds are a very simple aboriginal people, just now specially open to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. . . . They receive the message most willingly ; it is delightful to work amongst them, and we are astonished at the amount of Christian truth that has permeated into their minds. One of our first questions is, ‘Do you remember what we said to you in our last visit?’ The answer generally is, ‘Yes, we have not forgotten ; you told us of Jesus Christ the Lord.’ Many Gônds have given up the worship of the ancestral deities, and a large number of them are in a transition state. . . . This is the time for making impressions—the wax is soft ; do not let

us neglect this most promising field. The tendency is for India to harden; the aborigines, as civilization increases, become more Hinduized. They cannot remain simple for ever. This seems to me the time. I would say, humanly speaking, *Now or never*. There are large districts in the Central Provinces quite untouched—places where the sound of the Gospel has never been heard."

These words were written several years ago, and since then, through the efforts of the Rev. E. P. Herbert and of the Associated Evangelists (for Mr. Williamson was transferred to Calcutta in February, 1893), much has been done to evangelize this people. Thus, at the close of 1893, Mr. Molony was able to write:—

"To summarize: the Gospel has this year been preached about 800 times in the villages of this district, mostly in separate villages widely scattered; twelve Gonds have been admitted to the Church by baptism, besides several children of other Christians, and thirteen have been confirmed; two Christians have died; one new school has been opened. Progress, though slow, has been steady; there has been real development in the work."

Many of the missionaries report most hopefully. For instance, we read that "confidence is taking the place of timidity and abject fear in all the villages; and in some valleys a generation is growing up free from idolatry, witchcraft, and the old superstitions." "At every village where I preached the people seemed most interested, and even anxious to hear the Gospel." "The people are simple and eager to learn and hear."

"During the year we have had a most encouraging Sunday-school at Marpha, sometimes as many as sixty-five being present, which is a large number out of a village of about twenty-five houses. One Sunday three of the elder children were working at a village four miles away from here, but they left their work, and though it was raining and they had to ford two big streams, one of which reached right up to their waists, they came to Sunday-school."

Mr. Williamson, however, points out a danger which exists in consequence of the characteristic of which we are speaking:—

"Where light is spreading so rapidly," he says, "we must, of course, expect the powers of darkness to be on the alert; and much is still being done through the influence of Hinduism to strengthen idolatry, and recommend the adoption of Hindu gods. The Hindus are looked up to naturally as a higher, more civilized, and more opulent race; and the Gonds, who grow rich and of some importance as landowners, are very ready to ape, not only Hindu customs and dress, but also Hindu religious observances. A temple in one of the Gond villages, which used to be a mere mud-hut, we found, when we visited it this year, to be all renovated and white-washed; and we hear that hundreds of Gonds from all parts are

accustomed to pay it an annual visit with their offerings. Among the rough stones of the Gônd deities there we also saw one or two Hindu idols; but, of course, Hindus would not think of attending a Gônd temple; so it was a proof of these idols being worshipped by the Gônds. This is the only building at all like a temple belonging to the Gônds in this district, as far as I know; their gods are seldom honoured with more than a rough bamboo-shed, and not often even with that."

The chief stations of the Gônd Mission are now *Mandla*, the headquarters, the chief Government centre (46); *Patpara*, where the new Orphanage and Leper Asylum are (31); *Marpha*, the home of the Associated Evangelists, a place sixty miles from Mandla, in the depths of the jungles, chosen because most of the converts live in villages near there (113); and *Diuari*, where is the chief school of the Mission, a place for some time worked by Rev. E. P. Herbert, and now in charge of a native master (17). Besides these there are several out-stations, in charge of native teachers. (The numbers in brackets are the number of Christians in each place at the end of 1897—the total being 207, of whom about three-quarters are converts baptized in recent years).

But in spite of the increased efforts to which reference has been made, much remains to be done. The district of 5,000 square miles is vast; the population of 300,000 is great; cholera and famine have led to added burdens on the missionaries, and they continually press on us at home their need of prayer. This will never cease, until to all these simple, loveable hill-men the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been faithfully and regularly preached; and even then there will still be the call for prayer that, with meek hearts and due reverence, they may not only hear, but also receive God's holy Word, and truly serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

NOTE ON THE MERIA SACRIFICES.

These awful rites were at one time prevalent among the Kônds, the aborigines of Orissa, a branch of the Gônd nation. Meria is the name given to children whom the mountaineers used to buy from men that had kidnapped them on the plains. They were kept and treated with great respect until the recurrence of a great annual festival, when their bodies were fastened in clefts of a tree, their flesh literally torn from their living members, and the shreds carried away in triumph by their savage murderers to bury in their fields, as an offering to their great earth goddess, and a means of ensuring abundant crops. These crimes were suppressed by the British Government.

III.—THE KOI MISSION.

The headquarters of this Mission are at Dummagudem, an outlying station in the Telugu country, more than 100 miles up the Godávari. The Kois are Dravidians—a southern branch of the great Gônd nation—timid and retiring, like most of the hill-tribes, and professing an indefinite sort of religion, which consists chiefly in efforts to propitiate certain evilly-disposed deities.

The Mission was commenced in 1861 at the instance of Sir A. Cotton, who, being engaged on the irrigation works on the river Godávari, wrote of that part of the country that two things were wanted to make it a garden—the natural water and the water of life—and urged that efforts should be made to evangelize the Kois before they became Hinduized through the growing intercourse fostered by the increased facilities of communication. Meanwhile Captain (now General) Haig, who was in command of the engineer staff at Dummagudem, had established a prayer-meeting for the express purpose of laying the spiritual destitution of these poor people before the Lord. “The first answer to these prayers was given on the spot. The head of the Commissariat Department of the newly-established works, a Hindu of high caste (a Rájput), named I. Vencátarama Rázu, was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth in a remarkable manner. Captain Haig gave him a Bible. The very first time he opened it his eyes fell upon our Lord’s directions concerning prayer in Matt. vi., and the Lord’s Prayer itself struck him as being quite new and very true. He at once began to do as the Book told him, by praying to his Father in secret, retiring daily to one of the locks on the canal to avoid being noticed by his wife. By-and-by he came to Captain Haig, declared himself a Christian in heart, and asked for baptism. A month’s leave of absence was given him to go to Masulipatam and be baptized. But then came the wife’s opposition. She threatened, if he went, to leave him for ever. He knelt down and prayed most earnestly for her conversion. Next morning she told him that his God should be her God, and together they went down to Masulipatam, and were baptized there by Mr. Sharkey in August, 1860.” Rázu at once began to preach the Gospel with remarkable energy, building a large room for services at his own expense. In 1863 he resigned his post to devote himself wholly to evangelistic work, and in 1872 he was admitted to holy orders.

In spite, however, of the earnestness with which the Rev. I. V. Rázu and a succession of European missionaries have

laboured, the Koi Mission has had but a chequered history. General Haig, who went out in 1881 to superintend the work during the absence of the Rev. J. and Mrs. Cain on furlough, assigns three reasons for the slow progress among the Kois :—

1. That missionary after missionary has had to leave the station (Dunmagudem) through ill-health, so that for seven and a half out of eighteen and a half years there was no one there. Mr. Cain, who first went out in 1873, is the only one who has been permitted to labour in this Mission for any length of time.
2. The lack of well-qualified native agents.
3. The more numerous accessions from the Málas, the lowest caste of the Telugu people, upon whom the Kois, though a wild forest tribe, look down as inferior to themselves, and are repelled from joining a community largely composed of them. The motto of the Mission has been, "To the Koi first, and also to the Mála;" but the Mála, like the Gentile of old, has proved more ready to receive the Gospel, and the Koi, like the Jew, has been offended thereby. It was some time before the Koi Christians would lay aside their hereditary prejudices, so as to sit side by side with the Málas in the public services, and kneel with them at the Lord's Table.

Unfortunately, therefore, in the case of this Mission there is more to be said about the drawbacks than the results of the work, as far as the Kois are concerned. God's blessing has to a great extent rested upon the efforts which have been made; nevertheless, comparatively few of this hill-tribe have embraced Christianity, and it will be well to notice somewhat in detail the hindrances which exist.

1. *The Language.*—Mr. Cain writes: "If the work from the very first could have been carried on exclusively amongst the Kois, we may well believe that there would have been by this time a fairly strong Koi Church; but, by force of circumstances, the work was carried on in Telugu, the language of so many officials, whose visits the Kois regarded with anything but pleasure, more especially as the country up to 1861 was in a state of rude chronic warfare. Thus Mission work amongst them began with this dead weight. . . . All the women need teaching in the Koi language; and their knowledge of Telugu is so limited that they do not profit as we would wish by attending the services, which are necessarily conducted in the Telugu language. But what can we do? The Telugu work absorbs so much of our energies."

2. Reference has already been made to the difficulties arising from the *caste* feeling. Many of the Málas are servants to the Kois, and it is feared that the large accessions to Christianity

from the ranks of the former will continue to prove a great stumbling-block to the hill-men, and especially to their wives. The good seed is being sown most faithfully among the caste people, although hitherto but few of them have been gathered out.

3. A third hindrance is caused by the conduct of *backsliders*. To quote Mr. Cain:—"In 1869 occurred the first Koi baptisms; but, as Rázu Gáru has more than once confessed to me, his great anxiety to bring the Kois into the Christian Church caused him to press baptism on many who did not realize what a solemn step they were taking, and who therefore soon fell back. They were quite willing to obtain the privileges of a Christian, but not to fulfil the duties; and then, with the restlessness which characterizes so many Kois, many of them removed far away, and thus became scattered, and the work amongst them seemed a total failure. As the Koi women were untouched, they brought all their influence to bear against the Gospel."

It is difficult to estimate rightly the immense importance of winning over these women to Christianity. Mrs. Cain has been working very hard amongst them, and has had the joy of seeing some baptized. At present, however, nearly all the wives of the Koi Christians are still Heathen, and it is thought best therefore not to baptize any of the infant children.

There are some other obstacles which must just be mentioned, though it will not be necessary to say much about them, because they are so similar to those which have already been described as existing in other missions.

Timidity.—Nothing seems able to eradicate from the minds of the Kois in the Rekapalli Taluq the suspicion that the missionaries are in league with the Government to carry off their children to England; but around Dummagudem that fear has vanished, although the Kois, like the majority of Hindu cultivators, do not yet see the advantage of education.

Superstition.—The religion of this hill-tribe is much the same as that of the Bheels, a religion of fear. On the occasion of a severe visitation of cholera, or the like, even the educated Heathen place no trust in medicines and sanitary measures, but rely more on persuading the goddess to leave their villages by bribing her with the blood of fowls and goats, and other offerings.

Ignorance.—Mrs. Cain, soon after commencing work in the Koi Mission, spoke of the women as being very timid and very stupid:—

"The first time I went to see some of them at Nallapalli I was very disappointed: they all ran away, though I went at the request of the

men who have been Christians for some time, but are greatly troubled at the indifference of the women. One headman begged me to go to his house, because, he said, 'Satan will not let the women go.' So I sat at the door, and shouted to the women. I only know a few words of Koi, but they all know Telugu, and I spoke about my mother. Gradually they drew nearer and nearer, and when they had grown a little familiar I spoke about my mother's God. I paid another visit to that village last Sunday, and they were all very friendly. I invited them to come to our house. These are *ladies*, clad in about one and a half yards of dirty rag in their homes, making up for the clothes in the quantity of cheap jewellery they wear on their necks and arms. Some of them are better dressed than others; but all wear the minimum of clothing."

Although the mission to the Kois has not met with such a measure of success as those to the other hill tribes, more than a hundred of them have been baptized; and Mr. Cain in his last reports says that the work among them seems more encouraging than it has ever been since he first went there in December, 1873. The staff of European missionaries has been strengthened now and again, but only temporarily; but the Rev. I. Vencátarama Rázu, who has worked so long and earnestly, still labours in that place, as far as age and increasing infirmities will permit.

The medical work, in which Mr. and Mrs. Cain are assisted by Miss Graham, of the C.E.Z.M.S., is steadily and successfully carried on; and schools have been opened—one at Nallapalli, which is taught by three Christian Kois, being attended by over thirty Koi children. The itinerating work also is prosecuted with vigour: the villages near the headquarters of the mission are frequently visited; and now and again the workers go to villages farther off, and have evening meetings, with magic-lantern views of the life of Christ, to which many of the Kois come; so that in one way and another the good seed is being sown, and in God's own time will spring up and yield fruit to His glory.

During the years which have elapsed since the first edition of this pamphlet was issued, there has been but little progress. The Rev. I. V. Rázu has been prevented by increasing bodily infirmities from doing as much as of old; and though from time to time several Kois have applied for baptism, it has been necessary to exercise great caution concerning them. Mr. Cain wrote in 1894:—

"The work in the district is not mainly among the Kois, nor are the majority of the Christians of Koi origin. The condition of the Kois attracted the attention and awoke the tender sympathy of the early founders of this mission; but the Kois have been slow to

accept the Gospel, whilst Hindus, mostly of lower origin, have believed the message, and form the main element of the Christian Church. The Koi work is one department of mission work here; but, alas! the want of good men, who can apply themselves solely to that language, has hindered the proper evangelization of that tribe."

And in 1895 he said:—

"We wish we could report a longing after righteousness on the part of the Kois around; but, alas! they are too fond of their liquor, and cling to the miserable tatters of their so-called caste privileges. Although Rázu Guru laboured so earnestly among those around Dummagudem, yet they have not grasped the true worth of spiritual joys and spiritual wealth, and are quite satisfied with the husks of sensual delight and pleasure."

IV.—THE BHEEL MISSION.

The Bheels are a wild hill-tribe, of some 2,000,000 souls, the Mission to whom was founded in 1880 at the desire and expense of the Rev. E. H. Bickersteth (the present Bishop of Exeter), who had a family connexion with Kherwara, a military station near Udaipur (Oodeypore). The Bheel Mission is worked entirely in native state territory, chiefly that of Meywar and Idar. The states are ruled by native princes, "advised" by English political officers. This fact makes the work even more difficult than that in the Sántál and Gônd Missions, since some of the chiefs are painfully conservative, and determined to keep the light out of their territory as long as they possibly can. Bheelwara (the land of the Bheels) may be roughly mapped out thus:—Northern boundary, Mount Abu; southern, the Tapti River; western, forty miles to the east of the line of rail running from Abu to Surat; and the eastern limit, the line of rail from Chitor to the Tapti. Or, in miles, from north to south, 300; and from east to west, 200.

The Right Rev. A. Clifford, Bishop of Lucknow, but at that time Secretary of the C.M.S. North India Missions, who visited this part of the country in 1888, has given a good description of the people. He says:—

"The physical character of the country is much the same throughout—rugged ranges of hills, with cultivated plains between; watercourses, mostly dry at this time of the year (July), frequently occurring. The larger villages are inhabited by Hindus, and are often the property of a native nobleman, who keeps up a sort of feudal state. The Bheels do not mix with the Hindus, but live in villages (*pals*) of their own. Their huts are usually separated from one another by one hundred yards or so, with jungle or cultivated land between."

"This makes Bheel *pals* very large in extent, even where the population is small. They often cover an area of several square miles. The Bheels for many centuries have been noted as a wild and troublesome people, not fond of hard work, and often preferring to get their living by plunder. Every Bheel carries a bow and arrows, and a sword or knife if he can afford one. Near Bilaria, one of our stations, a fight was going on at the time we passed by. Two or three men had been killed. . . . Every few miles we came upon a heap of stones, which, I was told, marked the scene of a murder. The life of an Englishman is probably as safe in Bheelwara as it is elsewhere (we slept under trees in the open field, with no sort of guard); but to a native traveller the country is a perilous one. All this will show the character of the people and the state of society with which our missionaries have to deal."

The Rev. C. S. Thompson, who has laboured among this people since 1880, gives a somewhat similar description of them, saying that they are a wild, turbulent, mongrel race, and speaking of the Bheel children in their natural state in the following terms:—

"I was passing through a densely-wooded part of the country the other day, and came suddenly upon three little fellows quite naked, sitting under a tree eating wild berries. They were a true type of many Bheel children, as we first find them. A Bheel boy may be described as naked, dirty, often hunger-bitten, affectionate, and with no one to care for him. The wild beasts of the jungles have better shelter from the elements than have, in many cases, the little Bheel children. In a few districts the houses are pretty good, but in others they are simply made of wattle and daub, with a roof of leaves. These erections are not unfrequently allowed to fall to pieces to such a degree that to all outward appearance they are but heaps of sticks and leaves. In these places the children, even in the rains and in the cold weather, have to sleep on the ground with little if any covering. Is it any wonder that to little ones brought up amid such surroundings our school-rooms should have some attraction?"

Some sixty years ago the British Government tried the experiment of establishing a Bheel corps, with the object first of overawing the unruly, and then of civilizing those who in this way were brought under military training. This effort, however, has scarcely been attended with success; and several civilians and military officers are now watching with much interest the work of the Mission, to see whether religion will do that which secular methods have failed to accomplish. It is interesting to notice that these officers, who know from personal observation the work that is being done, have been amongst the most generous contributors to the fund for building a boarding-house and school for Bheel girls.

There are some respects in which the Bheels differ widely

from the hill-tribes which have already been noticed. The most important particular in which this difference exists is caste, for which the Bheels are great sticklers, while it is unknown among the Sántáls and Gônds. Mr. Thompson, in illustration of this point, tells of an occasion on which he stepped into one of the outhouses in Lusaria, where his servants were baking some cakes; he did not go anywhere near the food, yet they threw it all away and did a march of ten miles on empty stomachs. As to drunkenness, the accounts given vary greatly: some speak of it as practically universal during the Holi feast.

Coming now to a consideration of the religion of this tribe, we must be careful to distinguish between that of the Bhagats and that of the ordinary Bheels. The latter do not seem to have got beyond a vague fear of evil spirits and a belief in the power of charms to protect from their influences:—

“They carry their creed, with respect to distrusting everybody, even into their religion. If the rains fail, or there is a great deal of sickness in the villages, they do not try to pacify the irate goddess by at once offering a sacrifice. To keep on the safe side, they negotiate terms with Dévi. They say, in effect, to her, ‘If you send us the rain this week, we will give you the blood of a buffalo to drink on Sunday morning.’ The indispensable condition is—the rain first. And the climax of the business shows the Bheel to be a very economical man; the place of sacrifice is turned into a butcher’s shop, and all the meat sold in pieces costing from a penny to sixpence each. Dévi’s share is—the blood.”

To turn now to Bhagatism—at one time it appeared likely to occupy an important place in the future history of the Bheels; but recent reports speak of it as steadily waning. The Rev. C. S. Thompson, in 1887, wrote:—

“This creed is an aping of Brahmanism pure and simple. Its origin was as follows:—A few hundred yards from our Lusaria station there lives an old Bheel devotee, named Shurmal Das. Seventeen years ago he was in great trouble—a son, a daughter, and one hundred head of cattle died. In order to propitiate the angry spirits, he went to a local deity and vowed to make an offering of five rupees within six months if the curse was removed. At the end of the half-year disease and death were still at his home. He then determined to do severe penance, so as, if possible, to appease the gods. In thirteen years he, it is said, never once stood upright. In the hot season he sat surrounded by fires. In the cold season and rains his only clothing was a piece of rag about his loins. During his term of penance he twice rolled over stones, and fields, and hills to a village two miles off, and once to a Hindu shrine three miles away.

His disciples believe him to be superhuman, and to have direct communication with heaven. Their reasons for believing their *guru* (teacher) supernatural are:—(1) After never standing erect for thirteen years, he was able to rise up and walk freely; (2) he ate, at one time, 2 lbs. of red pepper; (3) he licked up boiling ghee out of a brass dish; (4) he swallowed 2 lbs. of molten lead. There are about 300 Bhagats. When they approach their teacher they remove their pugries, kneel, and touch the ground at his feet with their foreheads. It is noticeable that these men are by nature gentle, quiet, and inoffensive. Bhagatism has not yet touched the murderers, cattle-lifters, or inveterate drinkers. Shurmal Das treats the sick. His one medicine—a specific for every disease and sickness if taken in strong faith—is a grain of parched Indian corn, thickly coated with the ashes of his wood fire. Until recently I looked upon him as an ordinary reformer; but by living near him for nearly a year I have come to the conclusion that he is a successful impostor. He owes his present position and influence to a long, steady, and growing system of deception and lies.”

Writing two years later, Mr. Thompson says that the waning of Bhagatism is due to the dissatisfaction which the Bhagats feel with what is being done for them, and that they are demanding of their teachers an answer to the question, “How can we have everlasting salvation?”

Although the work among the Bheels was commenced as long ago as 1880, it was not until December, 1889, that the firstfruits were gathered in. There have been four clearly-marked stages in the Mission. First, 1880 to 1882, the getting the confidence of the hill-men; second, 1883 to 1887, the convicting of sin as an offence against a personal, holy God and righteous, moral Governor; third, 1888 to 1889, believing in Jesus secretly; and, fourth, at the end of 1889, public confession by baptism.

At first the great difficulty which Mr. Thompson experienced was in gaining access to the timid and suspicious Highlanders. It was just at the time that the census was taken, and some of the people thought that the missionary had come to take an account of their number in order that fresh taxes might be imposed; others, that a scheme was being prepared for giving the fat women to the fat men, and the lean women to the lean men; and so on. Even the medical work was regarded at that time with a certain amount of suspicion; while, when their timidity had vanished, there was dense ignorance to be encountered.

By degrees, however, the timidity and antagonism of the people were overcome, the dispensary proving of great use in commending the missionary to the suspicious Bheels. In

1884 the Mission was reinforced by the arrival of the Rev. G. Litchfield, formerly of the Nyanza Mission. He undertook the work at the station Kherwara, while Mr. Thompson was occupied with itinerating. Little by little the closed minds of the people began to open; one or two inquirers came forward; a boarding-house and school for Bheel young men, completed early in 1886, were filled almost immediately, so that the difficulty was, not to induce the people to come for instruction, but to provide for the numbers that offered themselves. At the close of 1887 the Rev. C. S. Thompson wrote of the work as follows:—

“There have been no baptisms in the Mission, but there are secret disciples. The fear of men is the great stumbling-block to their embracing Christianity. They candidly tell me that it is fear alone that keeps them from confessing Christ publicly. They affirm that if they were to become Christians they would be bitterly persecuted, and probably killed. They might, they say, become Christ's disciples if they could feel sure that I would never leave them. . . . It does make success, humanly speaking, almost impossible when one has to deal with a people just half alive, without the least sense of sin, and moral cowards. . . . Each succeeding year makes me realize more and more what a tremendous task you have set me—namely, of so living and preaching the Gospel of our Blessed Lord as to win the Bheels to Him. The end is sure.”

Mr. and Mrs. Litchfield were compelled by ill-health to leave the Mission in 1888, and were transferred to Benares. Their place was filled by the Rev. W. B. and Mrs. Collins. Before their departure, however, a boarding-school for girls had been opened. Mrs. Litchfield had collected the funds for the necessary buildings, one of the contributors being the Indian Prince of Dungepore, who visited the Mission, inspected the work that was going on, and exhorted the young men to apply their minds to what was being taught them, “as it was good.” At length, at the close of 1889, the first baptisms took place, concerning which Mr. Thompson wrote:—

“The converts are a man, his wife, and four children. The man is about 45 years of age; his wife is some years younger: the youngest child is 5, and the eldest 10 years of age. Their names are Sukha, Hirki (his wife), Teza, Badha, Lalu (their sons), and Mangli (their daughter). Sukha was a *bhagat*, or devotee. It was touching to see him give up his string of beads, when he was being baptized. He was one of the first to come near me when I arrived in Kherwara nine years ago, and he has been with me every year since then on some of my itinerating tours. Sukha is a fine man, commands respect, and is, I believe, a true disciple. Before his baptism the Bheels said to him—‘If you become a

Christian your fellow-countrymen will disown you, and the Padri Sahib may leave India.' The man replied: 'My friends may do just as they please. The Padri Sahib will never cease to be my friend so long as I love the Gospel. But even if he does, I shall still have all I really need—my Saviour.' Then they tried to frighten him by saying that he would be persecuted. He answered, 'I have made up my mind, once and for all, to confess Christ publicly,' and, drawing his hand across his throat, added, 'You may kill me after that if you like.'

It is interesting to note that Teza, mentioned above, is now one of the assistants in the dispensary, and that Mr. Thompson, writing of Sukha, said, "He is as bold as a lion for his Master."

Since this there have been several more baptisms, so that now there is a Bheel Christian Church—small, young, and dependent—which, to use Mr. Thompson's words, "needs much prayer."

Before leaving this Mission we must give three extracts from the letters of our brethren, which bring before us subjects which should be remembered at the Throne of Grace. The first two concern the difficulties which exist in work among the Bheels:—

"The work amongst the Bheels is difficult for one or two reasons. They have not the slightest desire, as far as I can see, to improve their condition either temporally or spiritually. So long as they can get enough food to supply the wants of nature they seem satisfied. Again, they seem very dense and unable to take in anything new; and any one who speaks or preaches to them must do so in the simplest possible way, and the same story has to be repeated over and over again before it will stick in their minds.

"Twenty-four baptisms after fourteen years' labour is not a very large number. Our numbers might have been very much larger had we been willing not to look very closely into the motives of the inquirers. The great cry among the Bheels is not for religion, but for bread. In this work one does need to understand the art of dealing with men. We have been most cautious in receiving applicants for baptism. To some extent the lethargy and indifference of the people account for such small results. We find, too, the plurality of wives a hindrance to the progress of the Gospel."

The third passage refers to a trial which prevails more or less in all Missions:—

"It is a mistake to think, as some in England do, that missionaries must of necessity be always living in the heights. We have our times of depression and trial like others, perhaps to an even greater degree—not in bodily hardships or discomforts, concerning which it would be effeminate to speak, seeing that military and civil officers pass through the same experience in the path of duty without a

murmur, but in spiritual isolation and separation from those many Christian 'helps' which you at home enjoy so richly. It is in these latter things that missionaries find their greatest trials; and I earnestly beg your prayers on our behalf that the more we experience of the deadening influence of this isolation, the more closely we may be drawn to Him who can supply 'all our need,' however great it be."

V.—THE HILL ARRIANS.

The work among the Hill Arrians, a Kolarian tribe found in the recesses of the Ghâts, is in connexion with the Travancore Mission, and was commenced by Henry Baker, jun., shortly after 1848, in a remarkable manner. In that year, as he was seated one day in his study at Pallam, his little daughter ran in to him, saying that some very curious-looking men were come, and wished to see him. They proved to be five in number, from as many different tribes, and had come with the request that the missionary would go and open schools among them. Again and again did they return on the same errand; but Mr. Baker hesitated to comply with their wishes, because his time was already fully occupied, and the villages whence the men came were separated from Pallam by forty-five miles of jungle, without any road, and, in addition, were very unhealthy. At length, to give his own words, "The heads of several villages came down and remonstrated on account of my delay. 'Five times,' said they, 'have we been to call you. You *must know* that we know nothing right; will you teach us or not? We die like beasts, and are buried like dogs; ought you to neglect us?' 'Cholera and fever,' said another, 'carried off such and such members of my family; where are they now?'" They stated that they wanted no pecuniary help, as they had plenty of rice. They wished to serve God, and not to be oppressed by anyone. In consequence of their importunity, Mr. Baker promised to meet them the next week on the banks of a river about thirty miles distant, whence they proposed to guide him to a principal village, and have an assembly of their people. Accordingly, when the day arrived, he and his brother made their way to the spot, but found neither Arrians nor people of any kind, but a dense jungle overhanging the stream, with only a narrow path by which they had come, leading down to the water. However, the next morning, after proceeding along an elephant track for an hour, they found some Arrians waiting for them, who took them to the village of Combukuthil, and gave notice to others that the missionary had arrived by

shouting from one place to another. By nightfall some 200 men and lads, the representatives of 800 or 900 souls, had assembled, piles of wood were lighted, and, with the moon also to aid, they held their conference. Mr. Baker described his reason for coming, and delivered them the message of the love of God, reading to them several passages from the Bible, such as John iii., Romans i., &c. The Arrians then asked him many practical questions, and discussed the matter among themselves, until at length, after midnight, the headman of the village said, "We have talked enough; where are the teachers we are to have?" Mr. Baker replied, "I will send them, but we must ask God's blessing first: He must help, or our counsels will come to grief;" and there, in the light of the blazing wood, all knelt down, and after a few words of petition for help, sentence by sentence repeated the Lord's Prayer.

Mr. Baker did not find it easy to redeem his promise, for there was considerable difficulty in getting low-country teachers to go to the Hills. At length, however, he succeeded, and he himself from time to time paid visits to the Arrians. Before long, persecutions commenced, at the instance of the Poonyatt Rajah (the local magnate) and Mohammedan and Romish merchants. To escape these, and also avoid quarrels with heathen neighbours, Christian villages were formed at Kootakel, where all the converts from the Poonyatt Zemindary were settled, at Mundakayam, and at Assepium. Later on, Mr. Baker visited villages much further north, and converts were gathered in at Melkavu, Erumapara, and in the Arukulam valley. Ten years later, Mr. Baker having in the meantime taken up his residence at Mundakayam, the Bishop of Madras found 800 Arrians under instruction, of whom 450 had been baptized. 173 were confirmed on that occasion.

In 1878 Mr. Baker died of fever, at Madras. His loss was deeply felt by the Arrians, who greatly loved and revered him, and to this day speak of him with tears. It was not until 1882 that another missionary was definitely appointed to work amongst this hill-tribe. Meanwhile, experience had showed that the plan of founding Christian villages was a mistake. The sites of Mundakayam, Kootakel, and Assepium, had proved very unhealthy, and the numbers of the Native Christians had decreased through death. Their standard of spiritual life, too, had declined, and many had become unsatisfactory. The wooden church built by Mr. Baker, at Mundakayam, had fallen into ruin; the native pastor had been removed to another scene of labour; and the European

missionary found it difficult to effectually supervise the congregation as well as carry on his other rapidly extending work.

After a time, however, a new stone church was built, and a faithful catechist, Mr. Punnusa, appointed, through whose labours the condition of affairs greatly improved. He was ordained in 1889, as pastor, and the congregations were incorporated with the Church Council. But he died shortly afterwards, and some wealthy Mohammedans took the opportunity of destroying the people's crops, and oppressing them in other ways.

Sad to say, the Native pastor appointed to succeed Mr. Punnusa, also died in 1897, of fever, but still Mr. Painter was able to write:—

“Mundakayam and its out-stations, though sorely tried by the death of Mr. Punnusa and grievous oppression from outside, which could not have been foreseen, and which nearly ruined several Mundakayam people, will, I trust, maintain and even excel in the future the steady progress of past years.”

Meanwhile Melkavu and the neighbouring congregations had been formed into a pastorate, and made remarkable progress under the devoted care of the Rev. W. C. Kuruwella, maintaining a high standard of spiritual life, and contributing very liberally. The numbers have rapidly increased, and the pastorate has now been divided into two.

The nature of the work at Melkavu, which is connected with the Mavelikara Native Church Council, has thus been described by Archdeacon Caley, who pays periodical visits of inspection:—

“Apart from visiting out-stations, visiting the sick, and conducting prayer-meetings, the pastor, Mr. Kuruwella, has an early service in church on Friday mornings before the people go to work. On Saturday morning he has a meeting for those men who do not belong to the Y.M.C.A. In the afternoon of the same day he has a mothers' meeting, which usually numbers nearly a hundred. On Sunday morning there is an early service for all; again at 10.30 a.m.: at 3 p.m., a catechists' service; at 6 p.m., a meeting of the Y.M.C.A., attended by 70 or 80. There is great heartiness in all these services. Mr. Romilly and I were there six weeks ago, from Friday to Monday, and were greatly cheered by the real earnest work that is going on. The number of adherents has increased during the year from 1,325 to 1,386, and others are coming forward.”

In 1892 Bishop Hodges made an itinerating tour amongst these hill-men, and wrote concerning them:—

“I was much pleased with the Arrians. We had a delightful service at one of the central stations where there is a *pukka* (well-built) church. People came in from all the stations—parents carrying their children distances of eight or ten miles, and one blind man had

come over with Mr. Kuruwella, the pastor of Melkavu, some thirteen miles. All these congregations lie on a range of mountains quite separate from the Melkavu range, and they already number more than 400 in five distinct stations."

In 1895 Mr. P. A. Samuel, who had long worked as catechist at Mankompu, was ordained as pastor, and the following year that group of congregations joined the Church Council. The adherents number about 500.

All the Arrian work is now carried on in connexion with the Councils, under four native pastors.

The Hill Arrians do not idolize evil. The objects of their worship are the spirits of their ancestors, demons supposed to reside in rocks or peaks, and Hindu deities. The religious services rendered to these are intended to deprecate anger rather than to seek benefits; but in no case is lust to be gratified, or wickedness practised as pleasing to these deities. The people are stated to be truthful and moral, free and intelligent in their manners, given to strong drink, unwilling to work for hire, and averse to carrying loads. A few of them are rich, being large cultivators of the slopes of the hills, which they clear of jungle in the dry season, sowing during the rains.

The work in the district of Mundakayam has been carried on with great energy in the face of many difficulties. These do not arise so much from the character of the people, or from unwillingness on their part to receive the Gospel message, as from the nature of the country and the opposition of the ruling powers. We give some examples:—

1. The *climate* is most unhealthy, especially at certain seasons. Jungle fever is very prevalent, attacking not only Europeans, but also the Natives, who suffer terribly.

2. The *physical nature of the land* renders the work very laborious; the country is mountainous, with deep valleys and ravines, and no roads, except tracks strewn with broken granite and overgrown with jungle, impassable even by a pony. In one of his letters Mr. Painter describes some of his personal experiences:—

"With fourteen stations, scattered over a very rough country, mostly inaccessible save on foot, I have much cause for thankfulness for health and strength sufficient to carry on the work during a most unhealthy season, while all my servants, most of the teachers, and great numbers of the people in the district have suffered from ague and dysentery, especially as the work requires me to take long journeys on foot, frequently in pouring rain through flooded country, with nothing but small native huts to put up in, affording scanty

shelter from rain and wind and the more dangerous malarial mists. Still I must say that in practice I have not found it as uncomfortable as one would imagine. Perhaps the most disagreeable experience is to take refuge in a native hut, thoroughly tired out by a walk in the wet, and find it filled with smoke of wood, which draws tears from the eyes."

3. Another difficulty arises from the fact that *the Mission is situated in a native state*, and not in British territory. Caste prejudices and influence are tremendously strong, and land tenure is very uncertain, especially in the estates of petty Rajahs, where many of the Arrian villages are situated, and where most oppressive customs have almost the force of law. For example, Mr. Baker was obliged to remove all converts from the Poonyatt Zemindary. And when Mr. Painter first visited it in 1882, and converts were gathered in in Mankompu and the neighbouring villages, they suffered much persecution from the Rajah and his servants. They were beaten; their crops were carried off; false charges were brought against them and the European missionary; and attempts were made to deprive them of land to cultivate. It was only by the interference of the British Resident that a church was permitted to be built. But patient continuance in well-doing has brought about a change. The Rajah found that Christians paid their dues more regularly than the Heathen; that they rendered him and his officers all proper respect; and in 1889 he became very friendly, and gave the converts new documents, on very favourable terms, for their property in their Christian names. He also presented a large piece of land adjoining the church to the C.M.S., in perpetuity, on payment of a nominal rent equivalent to 2d. a year, and placed one of his "palaces" at the disposal of the missionary whenever he passed through Poonyatt. In 1896, the Rev. P. A. Samuel, accompanied by thirty members of the congregation and some school-children, paid a visit to the Rajah's residence, hoping to be allowed to preach and sing the Gospel in his hearing. After they had sung the lyric, "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds!" the Rajah and all his household went out to listen, and asked the pastor to explain it verse by verse. Other lyrics were afterwards sung, and the Rajah said he was glad to find these hill-people so much improved, and sent them away with presents.

4. One more obstacle must be mentioned—the *opposition and semi-heathenism of the rather numerous native Romanists*, the descendants of the Jesuit converts of the sixteenth century. On this point Mr. Painter wrote in 1883:—

"At Ramapuram, where I put up in the church room, as the only available place, the priests bitterly opposed my preaching to the Heathen, while drunken orgies were going on unrepented in the church compound. At Erattapatta, a festival in honour of St. George is celebrated annually, and hundreds of Heathen mingle with the Romanists. This year my Readers happened to be present. A huge, gorgeously-painted image of St. George killing the dragon was brought forth, and a sermon (?) preached to the assembled multitudes—not, alas! on the love of Christ, but on extravagant acts attributed to the saint. How many times he was martyred and came to life, I am afraid to say; but finally, as he was being killed for the last time, he prayed that whoever should visit and make an offering at the annual festival at Erattapatta Church should be kept free from fever, famine, &c., during the year. 'Come, then,' cried the priest, 'and make your offerings before the mighty St. George, all-powerful to succour or punish!' And then the crowd drew near, and hundreds of poor Heathen made their offerings, and worshipped the image which Rome had set up."

At the new stations, Mankompu, Atakkam, and Kurinyapillamalla—there have been many hopeful signs. At the former place 101 were baptized in one year, and 53 subsequently at Atakkam. Of the death-beds of some of these Mr. Painter wrote:—

"One, a middle-aged woman, who had learnt well, and showed much earnestness, bore strong testimony for Christ before all during her last illness. She never showed any inclination to go back to her old superstitions, but forcibly urged all to learn as much as possible. 'Christ,' she said, 'is all to me.' She passed away at night, while her nephew, a pious young man who had joined us, was praying at her side.

"Another was a young man of great promise, about thirty-five, a constant attendant at the Saturday morning Bible-class, and very active in speaking for Christ to the Heathen. I had hoped much of him; but it pleased God to call him hence. He had gone over to see Bishop Speechly during his visit to Erumapara, and on returning had, we suppose, a slight sunstroke. He complained of great pain in the head and slight fever; but, thinking little of it, bathed. Soon after he became delirious, and died during the night. Though he never recovered consciousness, he spoke much of Christ, and died with prayer to Him on his lips, showing his mind was much accustomed to dwell on Him.

"Looking on all the temptations to coldness and deadness and apostasy around, an almost unmingled feeling of relief and thankfulness comes to one's mind on hearing of such being safely gathered home. May we not hope and trust that these are but first-fruits to God and the Lamb, which shall be followed by many others from these hills?"

The hope thus expressed was strikingly confirmed by the utterance of an old devil-priest at Atakkam, who nevertheless adhered to his pagan superstitions. He said:—

"I know that Christ shall reign on these hills. I have watched from the beginning, when two or three joined at Melkavu, till now thousands worship Him, and at last even here He is worshipped. It is like the sun, first tingeing the hill-tops, then gradually lighting up the sides, till at last the whole valley is flooded with light. And the day is fast coming when all on these hills will worship Christ."

Other instances besides these can be given. In 1896 Mr. Painter wrote:—

"Of the Mankompu people I can say with deep thankfulness that I 'thank my God on remembrance of them all.' They have been the Philippian congregation of the district. By a curious coincidence, Mekallai Curean (the former devil-priest of Atakkam), who was the first to come forward and declare his readiness to become a Christian on that day when the first converts joined us at Mankompu, died just about the time I resigned the charge. He had suffered much from his family, who remained Heathen, and from others, but remained steadfast in faith, joyful through hope. He often said, 'Jesus Christ is my all, Sahib, and I shall see Him in heaven.' Another convert of that same day, Konakel Sara, died about the same time. She, too, was a devoted Christian, much respected by all. Soon after she became a catechumen she lost the sight of one eye, and it was feared the other was going. The Heathen said it was a punishment for forsaking the worship of their ancestors and demons; but she never wavered. 'If it pleases God,' she said, 'for me to be blind, it must be right, and in heaven I shall have sight again.' Happily one eye recovered, and she was bright and active to the last, and, though old, most regular in attending services. She grew daily in knowledge and grace. The death of two sons, both godly young men, and her husband, were great sorrows; but they only drew her nearer to God. These, with others, who truly loved and served God, lie in the little Mankompu cemetery. One rejoices to think of them as safe at Home."

At the conclusion of his thirteen years' work in the Munda-kayam district, Mr. Painter summarized the visible results in the following terms:—

"I look back over those years with unfeigned gratitude and thankfulness to God for His great goodness. In spite of sin and shortcoming and want of faith, He made them years of happy work and abundant blessing. New stations were opened, thirteen of which promise to become settled congregations. The numbers increased from about 800 to about 3,000, and the contributions fivefold. With the help of kind friends in England, teachers' houses have been erected in most stations, old and new, five new churches built, and two completed. Land has also been obtained. The people have contributed liberally, and given free labour in collecting materials, &c. Of the band of teachers who were gathered together as the work increased—some of whom the very kind help of friends in England enabled me to support—I can write thankfully; of several most thankfully, who met difficulties unweariedly and cheerfully, and strove to win souls for Christ and build them up."

VI.—WORK AMONGST OTHER HILL TRIBES.

Since the first edition of this pamphlet was issued work has been carried on amongst other hill tribes besides those which have just been mentioned. At present, in the majority of cases, little more than tentative efforts have been made, and what has been done has been accomplished incidentally—that is, the missionaries who have endeavoured to reach these hill-men have not been specially designated for that purpose.

A.—THE TODAS.

The Todas are a tribe living in South India, among the Nilgiri Hills, who form the aristocracy of the hill-men in that part, and have been termed “the lords of the hills.” They are supposed to have migrated to their present home from Mysore, some 800 years ago.

These hill-men are neither pantheists nor theists, but have some confused ideas of a God, of heaven, and of hell, and possess both priests and temples. They are a pastoral, nomadic people, with peculiar habits and customs, and with a language of their own. They have the character of being very drunken and very immoral, and are said to be fast decreasing in number.

The German Basle Mission has for some time been labouring among these people, and meeting with considerable success, and the greater part of the work is still in the hands of this Mission. But Miss Wallinger, of the C.E.Z.M.S., on being appealed to by the hill-men, established a school amongst them, and in 1891 the C.M.S. native pastor at Ootacamund commenced to visit the Todas. Two years later the Rev. T. Walker issued an appeal on their behalf, and before long a second school, supported by the Native Church in Tinnevely, was opened among them.

B.—THE KURUMBURS, KURICHERS, ETC.

From Coonoor, the headquarters of the Wynaad Mission, in South India, 50,000 hill people of the *Kurumbur*, *Kuricher*, *Chettie*, and other tribes can be reached. The Kurumburs are dreaded by their neighbours for their occult arts and powers of magic.

The extent of the work amongst these peoples is at

present (1898) very small. The Rev. A. H. Lash, the first European missionary to the Nilgiri Hills, has opened a school for the Kurumburs, and one for the Chetties; but the difficulties which confront him through the unhealthiness of the climate, the lack of suitable agents and of funds, and so on, are considerable. Nevertheless, there is much to encourage. The C.M.S. already has converts from some of the leading tribes in the Wynaad, and in 1897 representatives of the Kurumburs, Kurichers, and other races were baptized. The first Kurumbur convert is now being trained as an evangelist; the hill-men display considerable anxiety to have their children taught; and several of the Kurichers have expressed a desire to become Christians.

C.—THE JAUNSARIS AND GARHWALIS.

Annfield, in the Dehra Dún Valley, is an agricultural settlement connected with the Mission at Mírat, from which it is distant 150 miles, but from this centre the Rev. T. Carmichael, the missionary in charge, makes periodical, though brief, visits to the mountains of the Jaunsar and Garhwal districts. There he has found a number of hill-men: in the Jaunsar district there are 50,000, in Sirmur 125,000, while Jubbal, Laddi, and Besari, have each about 19,000. All these speak some modification of the Jaunsari language. It has been found that there are a large number of lepers amongst the Jaunsari Hills, about 300 in all, of whom between 60 and 80 live in two large villages.

These hill-men worship a variety of deities, the principal being "Masu"; another, "Nag," the snake-deity; and a third, "Baiya": the propitiation of the second is supposed to ensure abundance of milk, and the third the birth of sons.

When Mr. Carmichael first visited these mountains, in 1890, he found that the people used to hide themselves in their curious double-storied houses; but the concertina and the singing soon drew them out, and they would stand and listen eagerly to the reading and preaching, and beg for another visit. The following year, on returning to this district, Mr. Carmichael received a cordial welcome, and was delighted to find that his previous visit had done some good, since some at least of the people had come to regard lying and the use of bad language as sinful.

It was soon discovered that while the hill-men could understand Hindustani in some measure, it was difficult to communicate with them freely in that tongue; so in 1892 Mr.

Carmichael commenced to write down some Jaunsari words, and on the occasion of his visit the following year was able to read to the people the translations which he had made of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Beatitudes. Great was the astonishment and pleasure of the hill-men at hearing the Word in their own language.

It has not been possible hitherto to make any systematic effort to evangelize the *Jaunsaris*; one visit a year by the European missionary has been all that could be managed. But in 1895 plans for seriously commencing evangelistic work amongst these hill-men were carried into effect, and now a native teacher is learning to read and speak their language. St. Matthew's Gospel in Jaunsari has been printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and a friendly hill-man has rented a house to the native preacher.

Something has been done too for the *Garhwalis*, for with the aid of one of that tribe, by name Sarah, a convert of the late Rev. C. T. Hoernle, St. Matthew's Gospel has been translated into the Garhwali dialect. Sarah is a useful Bible-woman, and through her these people are being in some measure reached.

As we read the history of Mission work among the Hill Tribes there are two facts which force themselves upon our notice—that the harvest is great, and that the labourers are few. It is the old story of opportunities given by God to His Church, but neglected through apathy, selfishness, and indolence. These simple hill-people appear ready to receive the Gospel. The difficulties in the way of work among them are but trifling, when compared with those prevailing in other parts of the world; but lack of zeal among Christians at home for the honour of their Master brings it to pass that souls for whom Christ died are left to perish without Him.

"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?" (Prov. xxiv. 11, 12).

"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us:

THAT

Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations" (Psalm lxvii. 1, 2).

MS. S. 12/22/19 - 28/24 - H.D.

Appended is a list of the European missionaries engaged in the work amongst the Hill Tribes:—

Mâlér and Sântâl Missions—

Rev. J. Brown, 1868.
 Rev. F. T. Cole (m.), 1872.
 Rev. J. Blaich, 1876.
 Rev. F. Etheridge (m.), 1889.
 Rev. D. M. Brown (m.), 1891.
 Rev. H. J. Jackson (m.), 1891.
 Rev. C. Hughesdon (m.), 1893.
 Mr. S. J. Jessop (m.), 1895.

Gônd Mission—

Rev. H. J. Molony, 1890. At
 Home, 1898.
 Rev. E. D. Price (m.), 1892.
 Mr. J. Fryer (m.), 1893.
 Mr. W. Holloway, 1896.
 Mr. T. Law, 1896.
 Mr. E. Walker, 1897.
 Rev. F. E. Markby, 1898.

Bheel Mission—

Rev. C. S. Thompson, 1880. At
 Home.
 Rev. E. P. Herbert, 1884.
 Rev. H. Mould (m.), 1894.
 Rev. A. Outram, 1897.

Koi Mission—

Rev. J. Cain (m.), 1869.

Arrians—

Rev. A. F. Painter (m.), 1877.
 At Home.

Todas, Kurumburs, Kurichers, &c.—

Rev. A. H. Lash (m.), 1866.

Jaunsaris and Garhwâlis—

Rev. T. Carmichael (m.), 1886.
 Mr. H. Bennett, 1893.

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